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### Commissioners' indecision

**W**hat are they going to do now? That is what the Sullivan County Commissioners must tell the county delegation, taxpayers and residents of Sullivan County Health Care about management of the facility.

After taking the nursing home from million dollar deficits to a surplus, Genesis HealthCare was told by the commissioners this week its services are no longer needed. Troubling thing is, there is no permanent replacement ready to step in.

The decision should not come as a surprise; last November, when incumbent and pro-Genesis commissioner Don Clarke was defeated in his re-election bid, the handwriting for Genesis was on the wall. Newcomer Jeff Barrette was the difference in the Genesis decision, though the commissioners did vote 3-0 to give Genesis a 30-day notice.

The process to find a new administrator starts Monday, two weeks before Genesis departs. Sounds like a great planning strategy for managing a budget of several million dollars.

While Genesis departure could spell disaster for county taxpayers, based on the last time an county administrator ran the nursing home, the real disaster here is the bungling by the commissioners. Last year, commissioner Ethel Jarvis made it clear that in her mind a private company had no business running a publicly funded facility. Jarvis offered little in the way of an explanation for her position, nor could she be specific on what problems she had with Genesis. Nevertheless, she made her feelings clear. So with the election of Barrette the commissioners should have immediately begun the process of hiring a new administrator. Yet for some reason they waited.

Now county manager Ed Gil de Rubio has been told to take care of things. Another quality management move: Dump the problem you created on somebody else.

The loss of Genesis isn't the most troubling aspect of the commissioners' action, or inaction, though we think county taxpayers deserve a more thorough explanation for the decision. Rather it is waiting until the last month before terminating Genesis that does not bode well for the Sullivan County Health Care's immediate financial future. We are not saying that a county employee could not produce that same results as Genesis, but the commissioners had an obligation to plan far enough in advance for a seamless transition. Now, the nursing home will be forced to limp along and hope for the best. Not a promising scenario.